

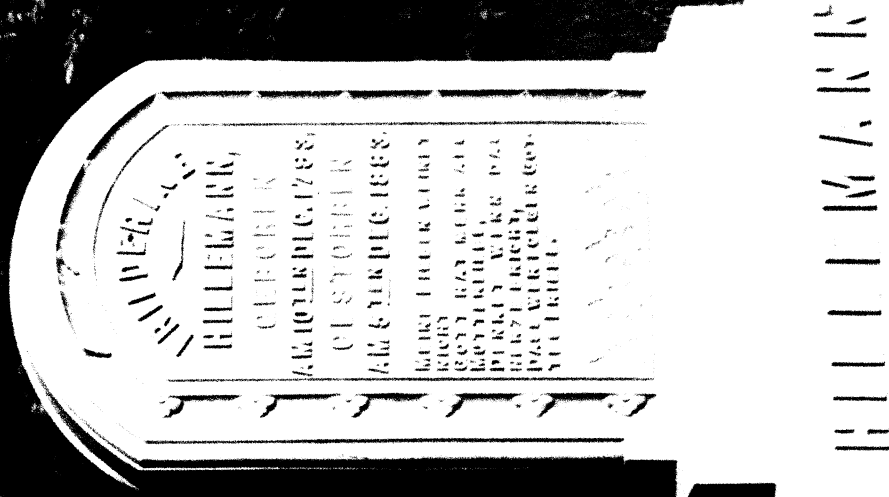
FREDERIKE UHDE HILLEMANN

1793 - 1883

Mother of Hillemans in Iowa

Verse translated reads

My dearest don't cry about me
God has more than just Mother love
If you think your heart is broken
Think about God's love



Henry Louis Hillemann, son of Frederick and Friederike Uhde Hillemann, was born in the village of Heckenbeck, province of Braunschweig, Germany, on April 21, 1834. His father was a weaver by trade.

As a young man Henry worked in the dockyards and on the railroad construction in Bremen before deciding to come to the United States. He was 25 years of age when he made the decision to emigrate. Having no money for passage, he worked diligently to save sufficient money for the voyage. Before returning home from work one day he purchased his passport. He discussed these preliminary preparations with no one except his sister, Amelia. When he was all ready to depart he then informed his father and mother of his intentions.

He and William Gerke sailed from Bremen on the ship NEPTUNE about August 1st 1859. The NEPTUNE was a sailing ship of 690 tons and was 38.1 meters long, built in 1850. Her master was Captain Bahle. The two men had passage in the steerage compartment which held 218 passengers. After a stop at Southampton, England, the ship arrived at New Orleans in October. During the passage smallpox had broken out on the ship and two passengers died. The ship was quarantined upon arrival and after being cleared to dock the passengers landed on October 31, 1859. The two men, Henry and William Gerke then traveled up the Mississippi river to St. Louis for the winter. In the spring they migrated to Plano, Illinois where they had acquaintances. He and his friend Mr. Gerke, soon started farming together in Illinois.

In the fall of 1864 Henry returned to Germany because of his father's illness, believed to have been tuberculosis. His father died on January 1, 1865. On his return to the United States he had passage on the S.S. HANSA a ship of 2992 tons built in 1861 with three masts, one funnel, single screw and a speed of 11 knots. The ship was 328 feet long and could carry 660 passengers. Her master was Captain H.L. vonSanten. The ship docked in New York on March 14, 1865 after a stop enroute at Southampton. Also coming with Henry were his sister Amelia and her son Frederick August Hillemann age 10. Amelia and a man named Bohnsack had intended to marry but he was killed in a railroad accident. Later when their son was born he was given the last name of Hillemann. Also returning with Henry was his fiancée, Augusta Eleanor Keunecke. The latter became his wife on April 23, 1865 in Kendall County, Illinois. They were not married in Germany because the law required that couples intending to marry should be able to make a living.

Henry's sister Caroline and her husband William Thomas and their four daughters and Henry's brother Frederick and his wife and two daughters followed later the same year to Illinois. Because of the law of primogeniture, Frederick inherited the family property. Henry was to have received \$50 from his father's estate but declined it.

Frederick and Henry bought land in Iowa and received title to it on November 10, 1865. In February 1866, Henry's family (including his brother's and sister's families) moved to Iowa. The women and children came by train and the men migrated by wagon. At this time the railroad was being extended from central Iowa west to Omaha. The first land consisted of 200 acres in Marshall county, Marietta township. It lay in section 29 and consisted of 120 acres in the NW1/4 and 80 acres in the W1/2 of the NE1/4. William Thomas bought 80 acres in section 29 also, consisting of the E1/2 of the NE1/4. The families lived together in a log cabin on this land in the beginning. During this time Henry and Augusta became parents of their second, third and fourth sons, Henry,

Wilhelm and Albert. The first son Charles was born in Illinois. Wilhelm died in 1870 at less than two years old.

The farm was worked jointly until 1871 when Frederick and Henry each bought land in Minerva township and moved there. Frederick's land consisted of 160 acres in the SE1/4 of section 24, to which he obtained title on December 28, 1871. Several years later Frederick returned to Germany to bring his mother Frederike to America. Because of being entirely helpless by rheumatism, she made the trip laying in a box. On arriving at the farm Frederick's daughter Augusta took care of her, slept with her and fed her until her death in 1883. She is buried at St. John's cemetery.

Henry's land consisted of 160 acres in the SW1/4 of section 24, to which he obtained title on November 13, 1873. Henry bought his land from HEJ Boardman and others for the total price of \$3200. This land was first owned by Joseph M. Pusey on a patent from the government in June of 1855. In the first home (which later became a granary) was born Henry and Augusta's first daughter, Lilla, in November of 1871. The present house was started in 1872 and here were born the last seven children. Also built was a large barn measuring 100 feet by 64 feet. The timber joints were secured with wooden pegs and of course the nails were square.

By the summer of 1894 Charles, Henry and Lilla had married and Albert was a storekeeper in State Center. The family on the farm was struck with typhoid fever, later traced to water in a cooling well used to store milk and cream. Augusta and several children became ill. Augusta died and Louis recovered but suffered health problems the rest of his life. Ida (Lena) took over the household duties caring for her father and brothers still living at home. As an added precaution the house was moved about 100 feet west, away from the barn. An addition was then added to the house which more than doubled its size.

Henry paid interest rates as high as 25% on the money borrowed for the purchase of these lands, but in spite of these high rates he prospered and acquired 1112 acres of land in Iowa and 180 acres in Minnesota before retirement in 1908. All of the land in Iowa owned by Henry was eventually purchased by several of his sons who became farmers. Seven of his sons farmed land in Marshall and Story counties (Iowa). The family homestead was retained by Henry until he retired when it was purchased by his son, Louis. Henry then bought a house in State Center and lived there with his daughter Lena. His grandson Dwight remembered riding with him at different times out to the farm and back by horse and buggy.

Henry died in 1918 and left the house in town to Lena. Albert then bought the house from Lena and he and his family moved in with her. August and his wife Anna had moved to Arizona due to Anna's tuberculosis. She died there in December, 1918 and then August and his young son Ronnie also lived with Albert and Lena briefly. Soon August, Ronnie and Lena moved to August's farm in Washington township. Later when Ronnie married, Lena went to live with her brother Will and his family. Charlie Hilleman lost his second wife in 1927 and he then lived with his son Gay on a farm also in Washington township. When their housekeeper got married Lena then went to live and keep house for them. She continued to keep house for Gay after he moved to State Center until her death in 1951.

Henry's funeral was held at the Methodist church in State Center. The service was conducted by Rev. Henry Markworth of St. John's Lutheran church north of State Center

where Henry had been a member. This was not unusual in the winter when the member had lived in town and was to be buried at Hillside cemetery. The body of Henry's wife Augusta had been moved from St. John's cemetery to Hillside in April of 1916.

Louis first became acquainted with Marie Leininger when she worked in State Center for the Allison family. Her parents, Sam and Catherine Schaper Leininger, were farmers north of Boone, Iowa although they had lived near French Grove in Minerva township where Marie was born. In April 1908 she became Mrs. Louis Hilleman.

When Henry left the farm it consisted of 160 acres in section 24, (the homestead), and 400 acres southwest in section 26. This land was divided between three sons. Louis got the 160 in section 24 plus 40 acres nearest in sections 26. William (Will) got 180 acres to the west in section 26 and Emil (Milt) got 180 acres to the south in section 26. Will soon married Louis's wife Marie's sister Lena and they all lived together at the homestead until Will's house was built. Milt had married in 1907 and had a set of buildings on his land also. Later Milt and Will sold their land and each bought a farm on the east edge of State Center. This was better land and their children would now be near the high school in town. They moved to their new homes in January 1920.

Louis and Marie became parents of a son in January of 1910. The baby named Louis W. only lived six days. He is buried at St. John's cemetery. Three more children were to follow. Lois in 1911, LeRoy in 1914 and Arnold in 1916. After their marriage Louis and Marie began remodeling the house which was now nearing 40 years old. A porch on the west was enclosed to make a second parlor or living room, and a change in the stairway was made. In 1911 a coal burning furnace was installed with heat runs to heat both first and second floors. A pantry just off the kitchen to the north was converted to an indoor bathroom in 1912. To provide water for the bathroom, two tanks were installed on the second floor directly above. One was filled with rain water from the roof and the other with well water from the main supply tank near the windmill. It may have been crude by today's standards but not many farmhouses had running water in 1912. The year 1916 really brought modern living to the country as a group of farmers northeast of town decided to bring electricity from the State Center power plant to their farms by building their own lines and setting their own poles. Around this period of time a summer kitchen was added to the northeast corner of the house. This was used for washing clothes, canning food from the huge garden, processing meat from farm butchered livestock and other tasks that took place in the summer.

Louis operated the 200 acre farm with help of 2-4 hired men and of course the farming was done with horses. One man that worked for him many years was Fred LaPlant and he later worked for Will Hilleman after Louis stopped farming. Also about this time a new hog house was built. It had an alleyway in the center and 8 six foot pens on each side with a small storage area above for straw. A rolling carrier could be pushed down the center alley and out the east end to dump the manure outside. A silo was built of clay block with a cement top on each farm of Louis, Will and Milt. The period from 1910-1920 saw much improvement and looking back we can see Louis was certainly a progressive farmer and leader in bringing new ideas to his corner of the world. Unfortunately Louis's health had suffered since his bout with typhoid fever in 1894. In 1922 his health forced him to give up active farming and move his family to an acreage on the northeast corner of State Center where a new house was built. A farm sale of livestock and machinery was held on February 15, 1922.

On March 1, 1922 the farm was rented to John Edler who stayed for 3 years. March of 1925 Fred Eggers moved on the farm and he was followed in March 1928 by Jake Irvin. In April 1927, Louis bought the Hennis farm, 158 acres in the northeast corner of section 27, Minerva township. In September of that year Ernie Frohwein moved on the new place, then in 1930 he moved to the homestead farm and Art Ernest took over the new farm.

The summer of 1929 Louis's health declined further and doctors decided to operate to try and correct a stomach problem. Louis died in the hospital June 19th. His funeral was June 22nd, his son Arnie's 13th birthday.

In January 1933 health forced Ernie Frohwein to quit farming and Harold Hilleman then moved on the home place. During these years Roy and Arnie were growing up and working on farms to earn money. Roy worked for his uncle Will and cousin Henry Keunecke, while Arnie worked for his uncle August. This was the beginning of the Great Depression and times were hard for a widow with three children and a mortgage on a farm to pay. Many farms did go under during this period but by carefully planning and God's help not the Hilleman farms. Both boys graduated from high school and Lois from Iowa State College to become a teacher.

Arnie later worked for his cousin Gay and Russell Diggins as well as his uncle August and cousin Ronnie. By 1935 the hard times were a little better and both Roy and Arnie wanted to farm so they and their mother Marie moved back to the home farm in March 1935. Marie sold the house and acreage in State Center to August Gerke for \$10,000 on May 9, 1936.

While the summer of 1935 was very dry the winter of 35-36 set records for cold and snow. The roads were closed with so much snow the farmers had to cut fences and travel through fields to reach town. The summer of 1935 the road past the farm was graded and in the Spring of 1936 it was a muddy mess. A team of horses and manure spreader got stuck going west to the field and had to be unloaded on the road to get it out. At least one hired man worked at this time, his name was Alfred. In 1937 the granary (first house) was moved about 100 feet to the northwest and a new corn crib was built in its place with the help of Bill Seeger Sr. About this same time a new farmstead was being built ¼ mile northwest for Jack Gerke on land owned by his father August Gerke, son of William Gerke who had immigrated to Illinois from Germany with Henry Hillemann in 1859. William Gerke had a farm in the northwest corner of section 23, Minerva township.

Christmas Day 1937, Arnold (Arnie) was married to Wilma Jean Fettkether at St. Paul's pastor house. Their attendants were Lloyd Bailey and Jean's friend Leona Tigen. Jean was a senior at Marshalltown high school and did not finish 12th grade. In May 1938 their son John was born. It was on a rainy night and the one mile south to Main Street road was mud as it had been graded the Fall before. Luckily the car got through and Main Street road was graveled to Marshalltown. Since Arnie was now married it was decided that Arnie and Jean and baby would move to the west farm in the Spring of 1939. Roy and Grandma Marie would live on the home farm. Arnie started fixing the barn there in preparation for the move.

As was the custom in 1938 nearly everyone went to town (State Center) on Saturday night. The older kids went to the movie, the women would shop for groceries and supplies and the men would get a haircut if needed or hangout at the implement dealers. Roy had a girlfriend and his own car so he went by himself. Arnie, Jean, baby and

Grandma Hilleman went in Arnie's car. One August Saturday night when Arnie was starting to go home, Grandma asked him to go south and then directed him west. The route led past the Catholic priest house and in front was parked Roy's car. Someone had told her that Roy was taking instruction to become Catholic to marry his girlfriend Rocelia Doser. Not a word was said all the way home. Grandma later told Roy if he joined the Catholic church he could not live on the home farm with her. Roy married Rocelia in September 1938 so the next Spring Roy moved to the west farm and Arnie and his family stayed on the home farm with Grandma.

While the two brothers farmed separately from 1939 on, they did own several pieces of machinery together such as a binder and rotary hoe. One of the hired men Arnie had the first few years he farmed was Junior Mulcahy. He lived in State Center across the street from where Arnie had lived in town.

An important event that year was the arrival of baby Suzanne the day after Christmas. The twins, Shirley and Sharen, were born July 7th 1942. This was the first year of World War II and being a farmer with a wife and four children kept Arnie from being drafted into the Army. Rationing started on gas, rubber tires and sugar to name a few. The twin needed sugar for their formula but it was not available so Arnie was able to get clear Karo syrup as a substitute. Vegetables were raised in a huge garden southeast of the house. Some of the beef was cooked and made into a German food called renderwurst.

The last of the children, Annette, was the first baby born in Marshall County on January 1st 1944. That summer Grandma (Marie) bought a house in State Center from Billy Watson for \$3500 on June 3, 1944 at 307 2nd Avenue SW. In September John started school in first grade at State Center with Mrs. Holtry as teacher. She was the wife of the Methodist minister and her room was on the first floor, east side of the old school house. Sometimes he took a sack lunch and sometimes walked the one block south to eat at Grandma Hilleman's house. Two things he remembers from first grade are, Anthony German had red hair and Jimmy Teeters had to go home one day because he wet his pants. His bus driver was Walter Keopke.

As 1945 began Jean's brother Max was drafted into the Army. Everyone was worried for him even though the war was winding down. He was married to Marjorie Kunde and they had a daughter Linda born in January 1945. Fortunately the war ended in August and I (John) remember the day well. Arnie and family went to State Center and there were people and cars everywhere honking horns and happy smiles except for one lady on the corner who was crying. Arnie said she had a son killed in the war. We then went to Marshalltown and the scene was the same. You could hardly drive down the street for all the cars honking and people everywhere. All the street lights were on as the blackouts were over. Everyone in the family felt that Max would now be safe. He would be sent to Japan as part of the occupation force. Word came to Jean in May 1946 that Max had been killed when his rifle fell out of his locker as he opened it and went off. While Max was in Japan his wife had been running around with other men and now she wanted to be free of the baby too. Linda was adopted by the Willard Lowry family of Marshalltown. She later married Martin Medus and they lived at Gilman, Iowa.

As the war ended farm machinery became available and when one of Arnie's horses died of sleeping sickness he bought his first tractor, a John Deere "A".

A trip to Colorado came in the summer of 1946 for Arnie, Jean, John and Susie. The three younger girls stayed with Grandma. On the way home through South Dakota Susie

needed milk and only unpasteurized was available. The doctor thought that was probably where she got scarlatina. She was quarantined at home for two weeks and the rest of the kids stayed with Grandma.

The year 1947 was house remodeling. The summer kitchen was removed and the whole house was raised up and a new clay block foundation was put in after digging out the west half that never had a basement.

One hired man around this time was named Tommy. As many did, he was a young man that came up from Missouri looking for work on an Iowa farm. He had a motorcycle and drove in one Spring day looking for a job. He told Arnie he would work one week for just room and board and if Arnie didn't want him he would leave. He was there a couple of years. Tommy had a trick of going through a broom stick by taking hold with both hands then stepping through with both feet and passing the stick up behind his back and over his head without letting go with either hand. Later Tommy sold his motorcycle and got an old car with a rumble seat that folded out in the back. Johnny and Susie got a ride around the mile in it.

About 1949 the upstairs closet/storage room to the west was made into a bathroom. A door was put on the north side of the dining room and enclosed to the stairs leading to the second floor. This was for a hired man who was married with two small children that lived upstairs. There was also a small kitchen at the east end of the upstairs. Only the southwest bedroom was kept for John to sleep in. This arrangement only lasted one year and they moved to Wisconsin. The next hired man was Kenneth Riemenscheider who lived just south in a house on the Scott farm. John started helping more in the field in 1951, raking hay and cultivating a little corn, so only part-time help was hired from then on. One man who worked part-time for five years or more was Amos Schimel from Clemons.

On Palm Sunday 1951 John was confirmed at St. Paul Lutheran church in State Center. It was snowing hard but service was held and on the way home the family car got stuck in a snow drift at "Eckhart's" corner. Arnie had a shovel and was able to get dug out, however a little over a mile farther east on Main Street road he got stuck in a really big drift. This time he couldn't get out so Arnie and Jean and five kids had to walk the last mile and a half home. Anne was the smallest so Arnie carried her part of the time.

In 1951 Arnie bought a new tractor, a Farmall MD diesel, along with a John Deere four bottom plow to replace an old Caterpillar tractor and a three bottom and a two bottom plows that were pulled in tandem. Also in the late '40s the stock cow herd was replaced with purebred Hereford cattle. The late 1940's were profitable years for farmers and helped many to switch from horses to tractors and generally upgrade their farms. One day in October 1951, after eating dinner at noon, smoke was seen coming from the big barn. The fire department was called but could only save nearby buildings. It was a total loss along with all the chopped hay, milking machine and some machinery including the new plow. Stanchions were placed in the middle of the smaller barn and cows were milked by hand, five at a time, the rest of the Winter. There were seven or eight cows milking at the time. John and Susie each milked one and Arnie milked the rest.

The footings were dug and the foundation placed for the new barn the first week of December and just before the ground froze. The barn, 40 by 72 feet was built during the winter by Glenn and Denny Thompson and John Eckhart. Arnie and neighbors helped

when they could. By April of 1952 the barn was done and a dance was held in the haymow which was floored off above the bottom of the barn.

In the early 1950's a three year crop rotation was used, corn, oats and red clover hay. About sixty acres were planted to each. One half of the clover ground was used for pasture for the stock and milk cows and the rest baled for hay and stored in the barn. Most of the corn and oats were used to feed cattle and hogs. The livestock manure was the only fertilizer used. The corn was planted with a two row planter with check wire. The rows were 40 inches wide and check wire made the planter drop 3 kernels at once, 40 inches apart. The corn could then be cultivated both lengthwise and crosswise as herbicides were not available then. The corn was usually cultivated three times. The corn was picked in the Fall when the moisture got below 22 percent with a two row ear corn picker that mounted on a tractor. The ear corn was then stored in the corn crib. The oats were harvested with a pull combine powered by its own engine. It would cut a six foot swath and the grain bin held about fifty bushels and then you would stop and unload into a wagon or truck. The hay was chopped and blown into wagons with a harvester that would also chop corn for silage. After the barn fire a new automatic wire-tie hay baler was purchased. A wagon was pulled behind it and the bales loaded on a wagon as they came out of the baler. During the year when shell corn was needed a man who owned a sheller mounted on a truck, Lorenz German, was called. Arnie shared help with neighbors, Kenneth Pfantz, Ralph Anselme, Roy Hilleman and Harold Hilleman when any of them needed to shell corn.

In 1953 Arnie decided to build a swimming pool. It was 16 feet square and about three feet deep located southwest of the house. He had been thinking of the need for a large water supply after the barn burned and the fire department was hampered by a lack of water. He also wanted his kids to learn to swim because he never could himself. In 1954 a 16 by 32 foot addition was added on the west side, much deeper for a diving board. Many friends and neighbors helped build the pool, dig the hole, build forms and pour concrete. They and their kids enjoyed it when it was done. Also the barn square dances were again held in the Spring until the barn was filled with hay in June. Successful Farming magazine came in 1957 to take pictures and one of the barn dances appeared on the cover a year later.

In 1956 John graduated from high school and in November joined the Naval Reserve which meant going to meetings in Marshalltown and later Grinnell weekly. This was a six year enlistment with two years active duty, still better than drafted into the Army. The active duty started in May 1959 so in the mean time he lived at home and worked on the farm. The late fifties the five kids enjoyed going to Ritland's roller rink to skate. This is where Shirley met her future husband Chuck Ballard. Susie graduated in 1958 and got an office job at Fisher's in Marshalltown. John left for active duty first at Treasure Island at San Francisco then a year at Naval Station, Adak, Alaska.

Grandma Hilleman suffered a heart attack and died in March of 1959. Lois kept the house in State Center and lived there in the summer when she was not teaching at Tama. John moved to his next duty on the aircraft carrier USS Ranger. In April 1960 he returned home to start farming with Arnie as Arnold Hilleman & Son. In the Fall of that year Susie married Jim Ellis and they lived on a farm south of State Center. In May 1961 Shirley and Sharen graduated and both took jobs in Marshalltown and lived there.

Also in May 1961 Anne was badly injured in a car accident coming home from Prom. The boy who was driving, Steven Geocke, was killed when an oncoming car crossed over the center line and hit them headon. Anne was taken to Marshalltown hospital and then transferred to Mercy in Des Moines with severe head injury. She was in a coma for three months until she gradually woke up. Anne was brought home to a hospital bed and round the clock nurses. Arnie and Jean spent most of their time working with Anne. John did the farming with a little help from neighbors. All our lives would be changed forever.

History compiled by
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